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POLITICO- MILITARY  
CONSULTATION**

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THOMAS J. KENNEDY, JR.

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# NATO POLITICO-MILITARY CONSULTATION:

## Shaping Alliance Decisions

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# **NATO POLITICO-MILITARY CONSULTATION:**

**Shaping Alliance Decisions**

**by**

**Colonel Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr., USA  
Senior Fellow**

**National Security Affairs Monograph Series 84-3**

**1984**

**National Defense University Press  
Fort Lesley J. McNair  
Washington, DC 20319**

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*To my father, who was unable to see this study in print,  
but whose encouragement was central to the effort.*

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## CONTENTS

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<i>Foreword</i> .....	xi
<i>About the Author</i> .....	xiii
<i>Preface</i> .....	xv
 <b>Introduction</b> .....	 1
 <b>1. NATO Politico-Military Consultation</b> .....	 5
Origins in the North Atlantic Treaty .....	7
Evolution of the Consultative Concept .....	9
Organizational Instruments of Formal NATO Consultation .....	12
Expectations of NATO Consultations .....	16
 <b>2. US Participation in the Consultative Process</b> .....	 21
US Procedures Abroad .....	23
US Procedures in Washington .....	25
Planning How the United States Will Consult .....	29
 <b>3. Other European Consultative Bodies</b> .....	 33
The NATO Military Structure .....	36
The Western European Union .....	37
The Eurogroup and the Independent European Programme Group .....	39
Nongovernmental NATO Organizations .....	40
The European Community .....	43

<b>4. Improving US Consultative Procedures</b>	49
Is Consultation Necessary?	52
Is Consultation Wise?	52
Sensitizing US Internal Decision Procedures	57
<b>5. Consultation Outside the Formal NATO Process</b>	61
Military Committee, Eurogroup, and IEPG	63
The North Atlantic Assembly	64
European Political Cooperation	66
The Need for Fresh Ideas	69
Summing Up	72
<b>Notes</b>	75



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## FIGURES AND TABLES

---

### *Figures*

1.1 NATO Civil and Military Structure .....	13
1.2 Council Political Committee Support .....	15
2.1 US Interagency Organization for NSC Decisionmaking .....	27

### *Tables*

3.1 Members of European Forums .....	47
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## FOREWORD

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has maintained the security of Western Europe since 1949—no mean feat, given that cooperation and consultation are the sole means of reaching consensus among sixteen sovereign nations. Because this process—guaranteed under Article 4 of the treaty—doesn't always work perfectly, fresh ideas are welcome.

Colonel Thomas Kennedy, US Army, examines the NATO consultative process and US procedures for participating in it. He recommends that the United States devise more rational and consistent methods for assuring that allied views are considered during the formulation of US policies affecting other member countries. He urges that the United States exercise low-key diplomacy, give increased attention to parallel consultative bodies such as the North Atlantic Assembly, and support the creation of an independent research group to improve the quality of collective NATO decisions. In short, Colonel Kennedy calls for neither drastic change nor elaborate strategems. He argues, rather, for mature good will and increased attention to the collective welfare of the Alliance—a call for mutual trust, respect, and cohesion.

NATO has contributed not only to North Atlantic defense but also to worthy cooperative endeavors in economic, social, and scientific spheres. Colonel Kennedy highlights both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in this vital organization. It is a study to be read by all who wish the Alliance well.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard D. Lawrence".

**Richard D. Lawrence**  
**Lieutenant General, US Army**  
**President, National Defense**  
**University**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Colonel Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr., US Army, holds both a bachelor of arts degree in political science and a master of arts degree in Slavic studies from the University of Kansas. His assignments include tours on the Army Staff in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans and in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, and a tour in the Office of the Director of Plans and Policies, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has held numerous other command and staff positions in the United States and overseas. A member of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program, Colonel Kennedy is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, the Army War College, and the National War College. This project was completed while he was a Senior Fellow at the National Defense University in 1982-83.

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## PREFACE

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My own peripheral participation in the process of NATO consultation goes back several years to my first assignment to the Pentagon in 1972. I did not, however, develop a strong interest in the process until 1978, when I worked intensively with NATO arms control efforts for Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Over the next three years my exposure to US preparations for consultation was constant. While I found many of the US participants in these preparations to be uncommonly skilled in assessing the positions and responses of NATO allies, as well as using constructively the formal politico-military consultative process itself, others were sometimes ignorant of allied views and sensitivities and therefore clumsy in shaping effective US positions. This uneven knowledge of and concern with allied views was especially marked as a proposed US position was worked through the process of interagency coordination. For all that, the system of NATO consultation usually worked, attesting to the strength of alliance cohesion. Nevertheless, I was left with the impression that American procedures could be enhanced if key elements of the consultative process were better understood and closer analysis of allied views more widely considered in each specific instance of US preparation for consultation. Yet, I never seemed to have time to consider the fundamentals of the process as I was caught

up in the fluid, day-to-day actions of developing and coordinating the issues themselves.

An assignment as a Senior Fellow at the National Defense University in 1982-83 provided me the opportunity to review the consultative process in greater detail. The result is this short monograph, which I hope will contribute to a better understanding of the American elements of the process and how those interface with other NATO and other West European bodies. I am particularly grateful to Colonel Franklin D. Margiotta, former Director of the National Defense University's Research Directorate, for allowing me this opportunity, and to Colonel Frederick T. Kiley, Associate Director and Professor of Research, Research Directorate, for his encouragement, constructive criticism, and guidance. The transition of my drafts into comprehensible text would not have been possible without the efforts of Ms. Evelyn Lakes, the lead editor for this product.

On a personal note, I am, as always, indebted to my parents and my immediate family for their encouragement and support. By ensuring that I had the necessary quiet time to think and write, my wife, sons, and daughter contributed immeasurably to my research, despite the personal sacrifices involved. Finally, I owe a tremendous debt to a former supervisor, Colonel John R. Lauderdale, US Army (Ret.), who not only introduced me to the arcana of the Brussels and Washington decisionmaking systems, but tutored me in the practices of patience, tolerance, and professional detachment in dealing with those systems. I have never met anyone else with a better sense for identifying the significant and the insignificant and the wisdom to deal with both.

Despite all this help and encouragement, there is an ultimate responsibility of the writer, and so I take full responsibility for this manuscript itself, and for any errors or omissions. I hope that it proves useful in widening the understanding of NATO's politico-military consultative process, and that it also assists my own countrymen in better coping with that process during periods when internal stresses strain the fabric of the alliance. Until some clear defense alternative to NATO is de-

veloped, I believe it remains a keystone of US security policy and that it is the obligation of those charged with national security to do whatever is in their power to ensure its continued effectiveness and cohesion.

**Thomas J. Kennedy, Jr.**  
**Colonel, US Army**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The short history of the Atlantic Alliance since 1949 has been one of unparalleled Western success in maintaining the territorial and political integrity of Western Europe without recourse to warfare. Periodically, however, this seminal defensive alliance is rocked by internal dispute and dissent as the sixteen sovereign members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) find themselves in basic and public disagreement.

Again, Americans find themselves dealing with the results of crises within NATO. The disagreements over the implications of events in Poland and Afghanistan and the NATO alliance response to those events were deep and exhausting. More recently, the differences over the Soviet pipeline that will supply Western Europe with natural gas touched off another round of wasting internal arguments. A number of observers have concluded that NATO is politically obsolete, and that its days are numbered. Some others believe that "crises" are reaching more fundamental levels because the nations of the alliance are attaining a point of political and economic maturity where their differences can no longer be papered over or put aside in the interest of public solidarity. Nevertheless, critics of NATO have been unable to make convincing arguments for alternatives to the current NATO defense structure—alter-



natives which would maintain *both* a strong conventional, but independent, European force structure capable of defending Western Europe *and* an effective and credible linkage to the US strategic nuclear deterrent force.

Some Americans question the state of the alliance and seek better solutions for security in Western Europe. There are, however, no easy answers if we acknowledge that US security is best served by a defense perimeter that begins in Central Europe. The purpose of this study is not to seek alternatives to the Atlantic Alliance. Instead, it focuses on the problems of remaining a part of a viable defense alliance over the near future and, more specifically, on how the United States can sharpen its manner of dealing with alliance business during the continuing episodes of political, economic, and social stress among its members.<sup>1</sup>

➤ The way toward such allied solidarity is not through confrontation or single-nation dominance, but persuasiveness within the political and strategic councils of NATO and Western Europe. The process that has evolved to generate alliance consensus in the absence of any supranational body is politico-military consultation.

In the NATO rubric, consultation is much more than discussion; it implies an obligation for each member to voluntarily come forward, before taking some planned action, and consult with all other members on any issue affecting their mutual security. In effect, each member has an obligation to both inform *and then listen to* his allies. Because governments are as imperfect as the humans who operate them, this system of politico-military consultation will break down on occasion, yet it has served NATO well for more than thirty years, and as long as the NATO alliance remains necessary and operable, consultation will remain the basis of mutual planning and decisionmaking. What follows here will not recommend structural changes in consultation, because, as Ambassador Bennett, former US representative to NATO, recently noted, NATO does not need more consultative bodies, but concentration on making the existing consultative framework work more effectively.<sup>2</sup> The place for Americans to start on that in-

creased efficiency is on our side of the Atlantic, rather than in Brussels. I will argue that the United States must shape its inputs to the politico-military consultative process more carefully, considering *where* and *how* and *with whom* they are to be argued, as well as their substantive content. I believe this improvement can be achieved by an educational process within the US government—a process which must be repeated with every major change of participants, but which requires no significant reorganization or structural change. I will also argue that there are parallel consultative forums, outside the formal NATO process, that also demand greater attention and consultative effort.

→ Enhanced US consultation is not only a matter of attitude, but a conscious recognition of the need for continuous, disciplined application of our national positions in a form that is both persuasive and sensitive to allies. This paper will first review the evolution of the consultative process, then examines the operation of the process in a number of organizational bodies, and finally suggest some practical steps that could enhance US participation in the process of politico-military consultation. Keywords: Political alliances; International Relations; Military operations; International law; Information exchange.

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## **Chapter 1**

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# **NATO POLITICO-MILITARY CONSULTATION**

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Political consultation in NATO involves integrating a number of organizational groups and procedures in an intense effort to achieve commonly acceptable politico-military positions. A useful first step in considering the process of political consultation is to examine the evolution of the concept since NATO's founding, the organizational instruments by which consultation is executed, and the purposes and expectations of member nations as they take part in the process.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Origins in the North Atlantic Treaty***

The North Atlantic Treaty embodies the consultative concept in Article 4 with the straightforward declaration, "The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."<sup>2</sup> The NATO context of politico-military consultation has broadened considerably since 1949, through both accepted practice and formal decisions.

Early alliance development was dominated by European issues, such as Berlin, East-West disputes, and German rearmament, and was shaped by cold war tensions. The military strategy of NATO was largely dictated by US military strategy and, consequently, many political decisions were reduced to confrontational, bipolar choices. Yet, during this extreme pe-

riod of commonality of defense interests, the democratic pluralism of the alliance members revealed itself in differing, though complementary, approaches to issues of defense strategy. Because the alliance had no supranational organ or element, unanimity was implicit in any common position or action. In fact, unanimity was *essential* to create and support the strong collective foreign policy positions that formed the underpinning of NATO's military defensive strategy. Even without the extensive alliance organizational infrastructure existing today, political leaders relied on continuous political consultations to mold their foreign policies into an acceptable common view, although those consultations took place in a European atmosphere of East-West confrontation that severely restricted the foreign policy options of the European members and essentially forced adherence to the militarily dominant US defense strategy. National differences were submerged by a commonly accepted military threat from the Soviet Union.

The consultation necessary to satisfy the rather limited language of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty was relatively easy to achieve in the simplistic conditions of the cold war. As early as 1951, however, the NATO Committee on the North Atlantic Community suggested the need for something more. The committee called for development of a "habit of consultation" to obtain "as wide an area of agreement as possible in the formulation of policies." This same group also called particular attention to the issue of timeliness of consultation, noting, "there is a continuing need, however, for effective consultation at an early stage on current problems, in order that national policies may be developed and action taken on the basis of a full awareness of the attitudes and interests of all the members of NATO."<sup>3</sup> Despite such recognition of the essentially persuasive nature of the consultative process, effective use of the process still eluded individual members. As one author aptly describes this frustration, "suitor nations solicited NATO legitimation for their own policies without necessarily accepting NATO influence on policy formation; the nations courted were reluctant to provide the desired concurrence."<sup>4</sup>

### ***Evolution of the Consultative Concept***

To improve the common decisionmaking process, the North Atlantic Council established a three-man Committee on Non-Military Cooperation in May 1956. The committee report, known popularly as the report of the "Three Wise Men," was approved by the Council in December 1956. It contained specific recommendations relative to procedures for foreign ministers' meetings, and highlighted the need for a Committee of Political Advisors for the Permanent Representatives. In summing up the rationale for improved consultation the Council stated:

Consultation ... means "more than exchange of information, though that is necessary. It means more than letting the NATO Council know about national decisions that have already been taken, or trying to enlist support for those decisions. It means the discussion of problems collectively, in the early stages of policy formation, and before national positions become fixed."<sup>5</sup>

The committee recommended principles and procedures to implement consultation:

[A] member government should not, without adequate advance consultation, adopt firm policies or make major political pronouncements on matters which significantly affect the Alliance or any of its members, unless circumstances make such prior consultation obviously and demonstrably impossible; in developing their national policies, members should take into consideration the interest and views of other governments, particularly those most directly concerned, as expressed in NATO consultation, even where no community of views or consensus has been reached in the Council; where a consensus has been reached, it should be reflected in the formation of national policies. When for national reasons the consensus is not followed, the government concerned should offer an explanation to the Council."<sup>6</sup>

In an observation of considerable foresight, the report also identified widening geographic concerns: "NATO should not forget that the influence and interests of its members are not confined to the area covered by the Treaty, and that common interests of the Atlantic Community can be seriously affected by developments outside the Treaty area."<sup>7</sup>

As NATO continued to develop in the more complex world of the 1960s and detente seemingly reduced the threat from the Soviet Union, the Atlantic Council called for a further review of NATO policies, to include the process of political consultation. The result was the 1967 report on *The Future Tasks of the Alliance* (or the so-called Harmel Report). This report attempted to rationalize the processes of detente and defense into parallel and complementary activities. Harmel saw the consultative process as a fundamental element in coordinating these seemingly divergent forces:

As sovereign states the Allies are not obliged to subordinate their policies to collective decision. The Alliance affords an effective forum and clearing house for the exchange of information and views; thus, each Ally can decide its policy in the light of close knowledge of the problems and objectives of the others. To this end the practice of frank and timely consultations needs to be deepened and improved.<sup>8</sup>

The Harmel Report also identified several agenda items requiring alliance consultation, including such common efforts as arms control and greater security for flank states, such as Turkey and Norway, and contained this strong geographic reminder: "The North Atlantic Treaty area cannot be treated in isolation from the rest of the world. Crises and conflicts arising outside the area may impair its security either directly or by affecting the global balance."<sup>9</sup>

The period following this 1967 report was characterized by intensive efforts at consultation within the alliance, yet at virtually the same time, events of great import occurred outside collective alliance control. For example, the United States

and the Soviet Union began bilateral negotiations over strategic weapons systems, and a Middle East crisis interrupted the world supply of oil. As the alliance moved collectively to regain its political balance, another collective declaration, this time adopted by the Council in Ottawa in June 1974, reinforced the obligation for consultation:

"The Allies" are firmly resolved to keep each other fully informed and to strengthen the practice of frank and timely consultations by all means which may be appropriate on matters relating to their common interests as members of the Alliance, "bearing" in mind that these interests can be affected by events in other areas of the "world."<sup>10</sup>

There have been subsequent declarations of the collective value of political consultation since the major reports outlined above, yet the theme is largely unchanged since this 1974 statement.

Although extensive, forthright prior consultation is generally accepted as politically necessary for the continued development and maintenance of alliance positions, it would be useful to clarify the implied question whether some legal requirement for such extensive consultation also exists. In a recent legal analysis, Frederic Kirgis indicates NATO practice has established "an obligatory norm" to consult within the alliance before a member government makes a final decision on a course of action that could have a direct, adverse affect on the alliance's collective ability to defend against an attack from outside the treaty area, or could significantly enhance the military capability of those states presumed most likely to attack. However, consultations are not required "before an initial decision is made, even if the decision establishes a general course of action that is irreversible for all practical purposes." A second obligatory norm requires such NATO consultations as are feasible when an ally contemplates action within or outside the treaty area that could lead, in the short run, to armed confrontation with the Soviet Union, but consultations that could cripple decisionmaking in a crisis are



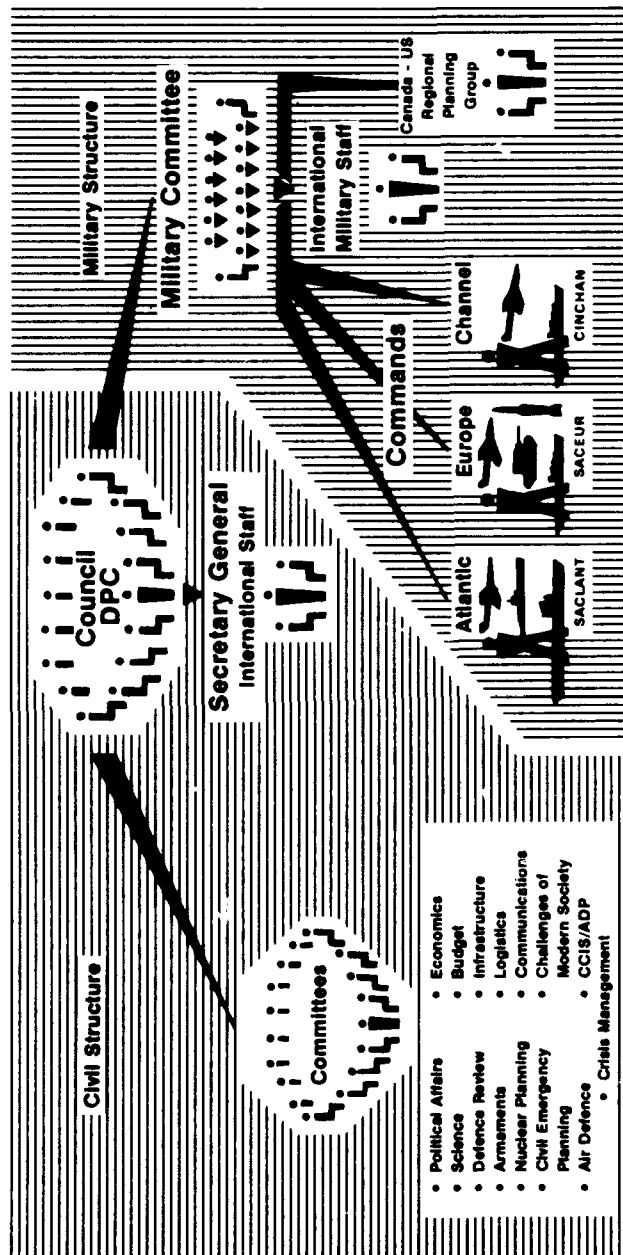
not required. Nevertheless, Kirgis concludes that, despite the sweeping language sometimes found in the declarations and statements, there is no all-encompassing duty to consult whenever an individual government's decision might affect the interests of its NATO allies.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, NATO consultation is a *political* rather than a legal imperative. Yet it has evolved from the rather limited language of Article 4 of the 1949 Treaty to a concept envisioning forthright, prior discussion of virtually any action that could affect allied interests, regardless of geographic location. The next step will be to examine the consultative bodies within the alliance which exist to carry out that mandate.

### **Organizational Instruments of Formal NATO Consultation**

The actual instruments of political consultation revolve around the sixteen member governments and the collective council groupings at Brussels.<sup>12</sup> In Brussels, all elements of political consultation are offshoots of and report to the North Atlantic Council (see figure 1.1). The Council acts as a primary consultative body under the chairmanship of the Secretary General. Because foreign ministers meet in Council only twice yearly (and heads of state only occasionally), this task routinely falls to the Permanent Representatives (ambassadors) of each member nation. The Permanent Representatives meet as the Council in Permanent Session under the chairmanship of the Secretary General, who enjoys great liberty in deciding the style of meeting. In addition to the weekly formal meetings (complete with advisors and transcribing secretaries), he arranges informal meetings (held without record) and social groupings (such as the exclusive Permanent Representatives' luncheon held weekly). Key members of the secretariat staff attend the regular meetings, as does the chairman of the Military Committee—the only senior military member to attend the Council meetings regularly. Although NATO military staff officers, with the exception of the chairman of the Military Committee, "participate actively in many

FIGURE 1.1. NATO CIVIL AND MILITARY STRUCTURE



Source: NATO Handbook (Brussels: NATO Information Service, March 1982), p. 30.

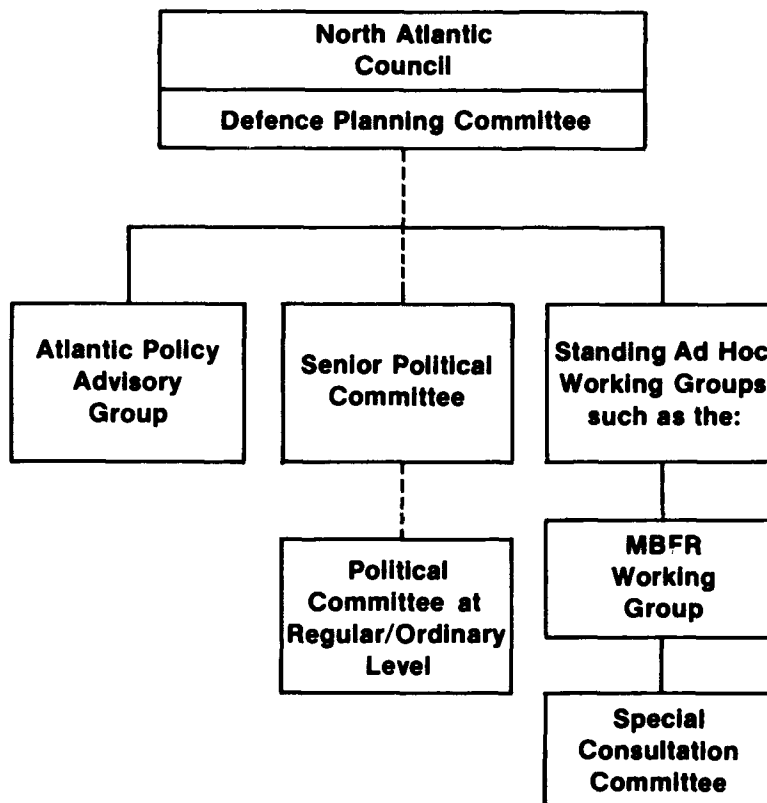
aspects of the work of political consultation,"<sup>13</sup> they are not a formal part of the political consultative process.

The Council also employs two subordinate bodies for more frequent, routine consultation and drafting work (see figure 1.2). The Senior Political Committee, chaired by the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, is made up of the Deputy Permanent Representatives of the member states. This committee is quite active, meeting a number of times each week, and in addition to keeping current with worldwide political trends and developments of interest to NATO, prepares studies of political problems for discussion by the Council and submits reports to it on subjects to be debated. The committee is also responsible for following up and implementing Council decisions.<sup>14</sup> The second group designed for regular consultation is the Political Committee at Ordinary Level, chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs. Made up of delegation political advisors, this group focuses on the more routine elements of political consultation, such as exchange of information and political intelligence.<sup>15</sup>

When specific defense issues, as opposed to general politico-military consultation, must be discussed, the Council meets in session as the Defense Planning Committee, composed only of the member nations participating in the NATO integrated defense structure. This device became necessary after France withdrew permanently from military integration in the alliance, yet continued to participate in political affairs as a signator of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>16</sup> Within the fields of defense, the Defense Planning Committee has, for all practical purposes, the same functions and authority as the Council. It meets regularly at Permanent Representative level and assembles twice a year in ministerial sessions where the nations are represented by their defense ministers.<sup>17</sup>

The Council is also supported by a number of ad hoc political working groups dealing with specific themes, and regional expert groups of national specialists studying specific world regions in preparation for the biannual discussion of the foreign ministers. Collective procedures for arms control con-

**FIGURE 1.2. COUNCIL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
SUPPORT**



Source: Based on a description of the fora for political consultation in *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Facts and Figures* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1981), p. 122.

sultation and decisionmaking are probably the best developed examples of these special groups. The alliance has special groups for consultations on nuclear arms control, for coordination of confidence-building measures, and for collective decisionmaking on the conduct of the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions negotiations in Vienna.<sup>18</sup> Another supporting group is the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group (APAG), created in 1961. Made up of senior foreign office planners from member nations, APAG's function is to take periodically a long-term, imaginative look at various aspects of the East-West relationship. Their work, conducted on a personal basis which does not commit governments, is reported directly to the Council.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Expectations of NATO Consultations***

Despite their common purpose as a defense alliance, NATO member nations have disparate national interests just as they vary in population, size, and geography. The larger countries have worldwide responsibilities in addition to their alliance roles. Consequently, it is not surprising that differences of opinion occasionally arise and that the process of consultation provides a quick, effective vehicle for resolving most differences and finding acceptable alternative solutions.<sup>20</sup> Among other benefits is the simple efficiency of imparting certain information in a single multilateral forum, rather than bilaterally through embassies in sixteen capitals. Aside from this obvious efficiency, some benefits of consultation relate more to the relative size of the country involved. Former Secretary General Manlio Brosio has observed that for the larger allies, consultation is "a way to legitimize and reinforce their foreign policy initiatives, thus obtaining a degree of involvement and support from the smaller allies; conversely, for the smaller countries it is a way of participating, or being seen to participate, together with the larger allies, in important debates and decisions."<sup>21</sup>

Former US Permanent Representative Harlan Cleveland sees some other advantages to be derived from consultation by smaller nations including a degree of access to current US

worldwide intelligence, and a sense of greater freedom in critical discussions of a US proposal than they would have in a bilateral context where the disparity in power and size between the United States and themselves is more pronounced. For the larger nations, he sees advantage to gaining early understanding of a problem that is likely to escalate to crisis proportions because most "international arguments about consultations stem from the sense of surprise, not from policy objections." He also notes that consultation can improve the quality of our own decisions by forcing us to think harder about what we are doing and why we are doing it. Cleveland sums up that argument with the candid observation, "it is comparatively easy for any government to kid itself; it is always much harder to kid foreigners."<sup>22</sup>

In certain situations, of course, consultation is less attractive. The more obvious cases include concern about the security of a particularly sensitive bit of information. There is also the more cynical notion that there is little use wasting time arguing with allies who will remain inactive even if they agree.<sup>23</sup> More common is the simple desire to keep national options open on matters considered vital. To consult is to destroy certain options in advance; to avoid such decisions allows more time to resolve uncertainties, to act unilaterally, or to simply procrastinate until an unpleasant decision is unavoidable.

The United States finds itself under constant pressure to consult frequently about a wide variety of subjects. The US reaction is often negative, as if this requirement were an onerous burden. Yet, the practice has constructive, useful purposes. Harlan Cleveland identifies a number of these specific purposes by noting that consultation can mean:

- Imparting information unilaterally
- Exchanging information bilaterally or multilaterally
- Notifying others of national decisions already taken, but without expecting any reaction on their part

- Notifying others of decisions already taken, in such a way as to build consent for them
- Consulting in advance on national actions that affect the interests of others
- Consulting internationally to ascertain in advance the possible reaction to a national decision not yet made (that is, as an input to the national decision itself)
- Consulting in advance on a matter lending itself to separate parallel national actions by others
- Consulting for the purpose of arriving at a decision which by its nature must be taken or carried into action collectively<sup>24</sup>

Specific instances of political consultation also entail certain disadvantages. The most basic is the shared responsibility a nation assumes upon being included in a consultation concerning a proposed course of action. In effect, the nation becomes a sort of "co-conspirator" at that point, and finds it difficult to avoid a position, even if that position is one of silent acquiescence. Deliberate ambiguity, of course, is not an issue when bedrock alliance issues of East-West positions or defensive strategy are discussed, but can become an irritant when a peripheral topic is placed unwanted in the consultative forum. Another disadvantage of consultation is that in those instances where consensus cannot be reached, an emphasis on political cooperation may lead to a "facade of unity where no unity actually exists." In cases where consultation results only in an agreement to disagree, the result may be to promote only "outward expressions of confidence and unity while creating inward feelings of disappointment, dissatisfaction, and, even worse, failure."<sup>25</sup> Simon Serfaty put this danger most succinctly with the observation, "in fact, consultation does not create a consensus but presupposes it, and joint declarations do not describe an agreement but often imagine it."<sup>26</sup>

With this background concerning the evolution of the consultative process, the instruments for its use, and finally the

expectations and motivations for the process, we can begin to analyze just how the United States goes about its role of participating in and preparing for NATO consultation.



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## **Chapter 2**

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### **US PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS**

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Over the years, the NATO consultation process has evolved into one of broad obligations, in which high expectations for rapid, harmonious discussion and decisionmaking have become the norm. No alliance member can withdraw from this process without some loss of influence and bargaining power. Consultation is simply one of the prices to be paid to maintain an alliance that is effective, yet is without supranational authority. The United States is no exception despite its relative *military dominance*. An effective national procedure for participating in the consultative process has developed over the years to coordinate the work of personnel in the US delegations in Brussels, in the US embassies serving each NATO capital, and in the US government community in Washington.

### ***US Procedures Abroad***

In Brussels, the US Mission is staffed by experienced personnel who have no difficulty in approaching each consultative task with a complete understanding of the policies and sensitivities of every ally. Consultation does not normally break down at this end of the system, although there are certainly genuine differences of opinion and occasional misunderstanding. On occasion, the US Mission may even be too close to the problem and become too closely identified with and sympathetic to an allied position. That mild complaint

aside, US positions are presented and argued persuasively by personnel of various US agencies working under the US Permanent Representative, although the Department of Defense actively participates in instructing the US Mission. There is also a US Military Delegation to NATO, supporting our national participation in the Military Committee. This US military group is directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Consequently, positions must be carefully coordinated in Brussels and in Washington to ensure that their military efforts complement overall US politico-military positions. Even then, it remains possible for the US government to support a politically desirable position which may be criticized on technical military grounds by the Military Committee, including its US representative. Yet, that possibility of conflict is necessary in order to maintain the integrity of candid military advice. In any case, the final decisions on such a contested position will be made at the Council (Defense Planning Committee) level on the direction of national governments.

There is no real question that alliance decisions are made in the general context of civil control over military forces and that even major issues of military strategy are subordinated to governmental decision. A clear example is the forward defense strategy of the Central Region, where the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) would be defended at its eastern border. Tactically, that border is not the best geographic line of defense, but political realities demand that military commanders accept the FRG boundaries and make the best of a tactically difficult situation.

In NATO capitals, the supportive role of US embassy staffs in the consultative process is obvious. These embassies are routinely included as addressees on virtually all communications between Brussels and Washington and the staffs must be able to argue US positions with their respective allied governments. In cases where a specific ally will be directly involved in a topic of prospective consultation (for example, if a US military force to be discussed is based on that ally's territory), common sense and simple courtesy demand some prior bilateral discussion of the substance of the proposals the US

plans to raise with its allies in Brussels. If there is already some disagreement in Brussels, low-key discussions in capitals may clear up the disagreement or gain proponents. At the least, the disagreement can be stripped down to the essential issues to be resolved. The basic point is that even in a multi-lateral alliance, a role exists for private, frank, bilateral discussion of issues which are or will soon be under alliance consultation.

### ***US Procedures in Washington***

All US positions in NATO must support some central national policies, and it is *Washington's role* to guide this effort. It is in Washington, an ocean apart from Europe, that perceptions of allied sensitivities and concerns may dim. This process is normally not a case of deliberate lack of consideration or slight. Often it is a reflection of the limitations of bureaucratic decisionmaking and of compromises between competing government agencies. The subtleties, so carefully crafted by the initial drafter (who fully understands the allied positions), are simply lost as the US position is bargained over in a search for intragovernmental resolution of substantive issues. The US position tends to become an end in itself, and its probable impact on other NATO allies becomes just one of several ancillary concerns as a US decision is shaped. This intragovernmental bargaining occurs at all levels, from the coordination of a short message between agencies, through the development of a complex policy review in the National Security Council (NSC) coordination system.<sup>1</sup>

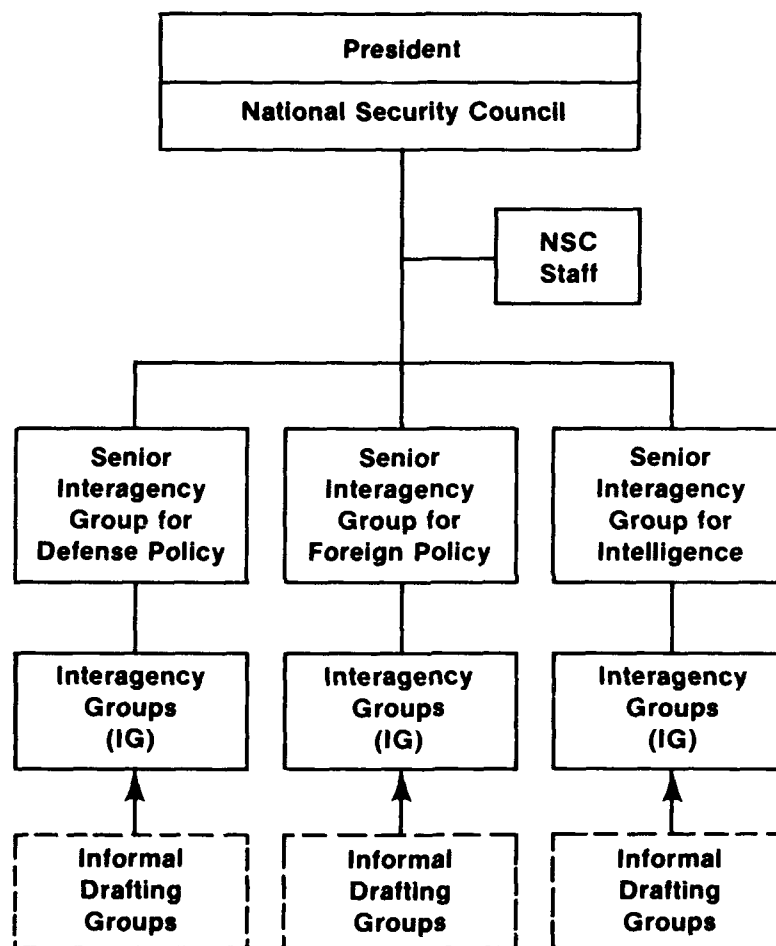
A hypothetical example of such an in-depth NSC review would be as follows. The US Mission NATO reports an ongoing debate in the Senior Political Committee regarding an East-West relations issue. Two distinct lines of thought are developing around the differing positions of two allied governments. The US Mission NATO gives its own analysis and some recommendations. No existing policy position appears to cover the situation. The issue is an important watershed that will commit NATO to a major policy line and will require a decision at high levels of the US government. The present US

NSC-directed functional organization for interagency development of such a coordinated government position would require the Department of State to take the lead on such a foreign policy issue in this case (see figure 2.1).

The initial step would be coordination at a working level where other agency views and data are collected by the responsible State Department office. Some drafting meetings would take place with working level representatives of the NSC staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Central Intelligence Agency, and any other departments or agencies with an institutional stake in the issue (for example, Energy or Arms Control and Disarmament). The result would be an analysis, concluding with several options or recommended positions. Assuming some differences of opinion between agencies, this analysis document would first be discussed in a meeting of a regional or functional Interagency Group (IG) chaired by the appropriate Assistant Secretary of State and attended by commensurate ranking personnel of all other participating departments or agencies. As a result of the meeting, the proposal could be modified, dropping some options that have no support and adding others that reflect other agencies' views or positions.

Even at this relatively early stage, the carefully constructed concepts that had fully incorporated allied sensitivities may be significantly reshaped. If disagreement continues, the results of the IG meeting would then go on to a meeting of the Senior Interagency Group for Foreign Policy chaired by the Deputy Secretary of State and attended by appropriate ranks from the other participating agencies. This group may be empowered to act on the matter if there is consensus, or alternatively, to present it to the National Security Council for decision. This latter step would be necessary if the issue is of great importance or if there is still serious disagreement between departments and agencies. Clearly, these upper levels of review are knowledgeable of and sensitive to allied views on the issue at hand, but overarching considerations of resource implications, congressional views, and the President's strategic policies would drive the final decision.

**FIGURE 2.1. US INTERAGENCY ORGANIZATION  
FOR NSC DECISIONMAKING**



Source: Based on descriptions of the Reagan administration NSC structure contained in a 12 January 1982 press statement by the President.

Not every policy decision need follow such a complete review process, and most can be resolved at lower levels, especially if there is consensus among departments and agencies and if dollars or other major resource inputs are not involved. In a crisis situation, some decisions are advanced directly to high levels without much working level review, but the benefit of such speed may be undercut by the potential for factual error or misunderstanding inherent in shortcuts. Occasionally, institutional disagreements can be so technical and complex that it becomes difficult to move the issue to policy levels because decisionmakers object to being caught up in the "nuts and bolts" aspects of the problem. Sometimes it is simply difficult to get the right players together in one room for a couple of hours, and as a result, days are lost to calendar reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

A former member of the NATO Canadian delegation has noted that delay in decisionmaking in NATO capitals is one of the principal difficulties affecting NATO's efficiency, and the problem is not limited to the United States.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, timing is often crucial to the scheduled meetings at NATO headquarters in Brussels, where agendas demand discussion of specific issues at a given meeting. There is also constant pressure to reach consensus so that implementation of needed policies can begin. While West Europeans can deal with their capitals almost directly, members such as the United States, Canada, and Turkey must deal with differing time zones and business hours. When an intergovernmental wrangle over a national position occurs, the critical timing for instructions to Brussels breaks down, and delays can stretch out for days or weeks.

Despite the occasional procedural mutilation of proposed US positions in the NSC coordinating process, the results are by no means entirely void of consideration for the views and sensitivities of NATO allies. Nevertheless, the policy decision process required by a government dealing with a great volume of international issues tends to center on the intrinsic substance of the issue, at the expense of many other concerns. If

decisionmakers are to consider the probable reactions of allies to those decisions, their staffs must take positive steps at each level to refocus their attention on those external views because it will not occur naturally. An equally demanding task, however, is the need to simultaneously develop a plan for presenting and employing the US position within NATO. This task necessitates a forward thinking concept about what role allied nations could or should have in this US position.

### ***Planning How the United States Will Consult***

The first decision is whether a proposed US position is appropriate for formal NATO consultation prior to decision or execution? There was a time when this was a straightforward sort of choice, based largely on geography (the NATO areas of Western Europe, North America, and the Atlantic north of the Tropic of Cancer) and the military or defense content. As reviewed in chapter 1, however, the evolution of the mutually understood scope of consultation, culminating in the 1974 Ottawa declaration, now demands consultation on all matters of common interest, *"bearing in mind that these interests can be affected by events in other areas of the world."* Consequently, this evolution of alliance thought has considerably broadened the number of situations calling for consultation.

Americans are not, however, entirely comfortable with this broadened interpretation of the obligation to consult. Over the last decade, the diverging European view of the non-NATO world brings increasing disagreement over US policies in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. The United States often tends to view its allies as critics without responsibilities in those other regions of the world and to rationalize away the need for consultation as too "destructive" or "divisive" to alliance cohesion. Although the decision to consult or not consult may *eventually* be made on such tactical issues as the level of dissent consultation will engender, it is intellectually dishonest to confuse that tactical decision with the more fundamental one of our obligation to consult on any given topic. This is not an easy task for Americans, who during the last half century



have a history of making their own superpower decisions without seeking much foreign advice.

Based on his NATO experiences, Roger Hill identifies three general types of limits to consultation. The first, area limits, envisions limiting discussion to generally agreed policy areas (not geographic areas), such as East-West relations and inter-allied relationships, or to a few third countries or regions. National plans in other policy areas, for example, current US plans toward Southeast Asia, would not normally be reviewed before adoption, unless they would somehow affect NATO collective interests. Clearly, this limitation does not rule out a simple exchange of information or prior announcement of intentions in the NATO forum, but it would limit prior consultation intended to influence a national decision or action. Hill's second category is functional limits, or the belief that some matters should be considered collectively in NATO, while others are better left to the normal operations of inter-allied consultation or bilateral diplomacy. His third grouping is thematic limits, reflecting the tendency to leave much of the consultation on some political or quasipolitical subjects, for example, economic issues, to another forum or process other than NATO.<sup>4</sup>

Hill's analysis is useful in focusing our attention on the *intrinsic* nature of the topic, and in not allowing us to speculate on the desirability or advisability of consulting about the topic. By concentrating on these intrinsic elements we can certainly make better-informed decisions whether or not to consult, but such judgments should be consciously made, as the gray areas are many. While these judgments are difficult on an individual basis, they are even more stressful in the context of an interagency decision. As the interagency coordination of a US position proceeds, it is not unusual to see attention wavering between the obligation to consult and the advisability of consulting. The result of such wavering is that, to use a sports analogy, once the eye is taken off the ball, the probability of an error increases dramatically.

Once the initial decision is reached to consult about an issue, the next problem is determining how to go about presenting the issue. But, this second decision on presentation demands an analysis of what response we desire from our NATO allies. For example, do we wish that they merely be forewarned or informed, do we want their views and advice, or do we want their active support and cooperation? This process calls for detached, tough-minded analysis and judgment, because the result desired must be realistically achievable at an acceptable political cost. At this point, considerations of the "advisability" of consultation play a constructive role as our candid assessment of the "art of the possible" shapes the manner of presentation and the form of consultation to achieve the desired allied response.

Americans are generally effective in dealing with this part of the consultative process because we tend to stress pragmatic problem solving as a management norm. Occasionally, a blind spot caused by preconceptions or political ideology will interfere, but the greatest danger of error at this point in the decisionmaking process probably comes from a lack of knowledge of allied concerns and views. There may even be a tendency toward overoptimism in our own ability to convince our allies to support a proposed course of action. Yet, sometimes our allies simply want to be forewarned rather than involved because participation would be beyond their national capacity. Their coalitions may be too tenuous, or legal and constitutional restrictions may exist, or the action may be so domestically explosive that they are unable to participate. Yet, being forewarned and having had their chance to be heard, these same allies may not feel the need for extensive public criticism of the ensuing US action or policy.

To be most effective, the type of rigorous, prior analysis outlined above should be integrated into the US interagency decision process itself so the assessments can be recognized and understood by *every participant from every agency* taking part in that decision review, not just the specialists involved in constant interface with the allies. If such analysis can be made a part of that review process, allied views and

probable responses can significantly affect the selection of US options. Most good interagency decision papers contain many elements of allied views and the presentational objectives of the United States. Yet, these arguments tend to be caught in the so-called boiler plate or detailed staff paper, read only by a few participants at interested departments and agencies. Frequently, these descriptions do not make their way into the pithy summaries likely to be the only parts read by harried American decisionmakers at the upper levels of government. As a result, the presentation of allied views and projected responses to the higher level decisionmaker is often uneven and incomplete. There is a valid argument that such points are usually subjective judgments and do not merit the same weight as the factual arguments presented in those same documents, but this is not sufficient excuse for their exclusion.

The NATO politico-military consultative process is not, however, limited entirely to the official channels of the Brussels civil organization, the executive branch of the US government, and the other allied governments in their fifteen respective capitals. There are other NATO organizational players, some nongovernmental organizations, and parallel European organizations that influence the multinational positions and decisions of NATO.

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## **Chapter 3**

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### **OTHER EUROPEAN CONSULTATIVE BODIES**

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The primary task of NATO politico-military consultation is accomplished in the organization's political committees, the Council (Defense Planning Committee), and in national capitals. NATO consultation, however, is not limited to those bodies, as other, more specialized groups also participate in the consensus-forming process both within the formal NATO structure and in affiliated groups. Additionally, ten European members have developed a parallel structure for political cooperation within the framework of the European Community; this organization deserves careful consideration by American participants in the NATO politico-military consultation process.

The organizations discussed below are only rarely inter-linked with each other, yet each has a place in the politico-military or security policy process in the Western European context. Some are directly influential (the Military Committee) and some exert their influence through Atlantic elites (the North Atlantic Assembly and North Atlantic Treaty Association). Some are highly technical and devoted to matters of defense doctrine and armaments (the Eurogroup and the Independent European Programme Group). Some have declined in influence (the Western European Union), while others appear to be ascending in influence and effectiveness (the process of European Political Cooperation). All these organizations have some consultative role to play, however. The question to be considered in each case is whether, in its rela-

tionship with these organizations, the United States can enhance the quality of its overall consultative influence within both NATO and other security policy deliberations of Western Europe.

### ***The NATO Military Structure***

The role of the Military Committee in its relationships with the Council/Defense Planning Committee (DPC) has already been briefly mentioned. The Military Committee (MC), the highest military authority in the alliance, is responsible both for advising on before, and executing after, the Council/DPC military decisions.<sup>1</sup> The Military Committee also provides NATO interface with the major NATO commands (Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, and Commander in Chief, Channel), and a full range of military agencies, most of which deal with highly technical issues (for example, the Advisory Group for Aerospace Research and Development).<sup>2</sup> The NATO Defense College, located in Rome, is also under the control of the Military Committee. This institution provides a course of study for senior military and civilian officers, chosen by their governments, which prepares them for subsequent NATO assignments.

For the purposes of this review, however, it is worth noting that virtually every activity under MC control provides the opportunity for continuous consultation for the purpose of military-related problem solving. But, with the exception of the MC members themselves and a very few senior commanders who must sometimes deal with allies at a national level, the thrust of the work of these military bodies is not to achieve politico-military agreement on major issues, but to advise on and to execute tasks within a politico-military context already established. This distinction may be of little comfort to any given NATO staff officer whose difficult or seemingly impossible military task requires the greatest diplomacy and skill in consensus building. Another generalization is that within such delicately balanced staff structures, it becomes difficult to raise a controversial politico-military issue through military command channels to the Council (Defense Planning Commit-

tee). Rather than create hard feelings and dissension over such an issue, an ally or group of allies may elect to shift the matter into national channels for a more routine presentation through the civil side of NATO. The Military Committee would then have an opportunity to comment and give technical advice as a body, before the matter is disposed of by the Council/Defense Planning Committee. This is not to say, however, that a situation which relates a clear military risk for NATO will not be challenged in military channels despite its political implications and brought to the Council/Defense Planning Committee for resolution. The position of the Military Committee as an independent body reporting *directly* to the Council/Defense Planning Committee ensures that capability.

### ***The Western European Union***

Within the NATO framework, there are purely European efforts at defense coordination, although they have been deliberately suppressed to avoid a psychological rift between the two shores of the Atlantic Alliance. The core of the European defense grouping is the Western European Union (WEU), which antedates the Atlantic Alliance. This treaty grouping of the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Italy has only a moribund consultative system owing to the participation of all its members in the wider North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the Western European Union has turned over almost all of its military functions to NATO and has retained only two: periodic reports regarding the limitations undertaken by Germany renouncing the production or acquisition of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons, as well as certain other weapons systems, and promoting standardization of military equipment. Militarily, the union has been almost completely eclipsed by NATO, but one element, the WEU Assembly, remains active.

The WEU Assembly consists of members appointed by national parliaments and conducts regular, active debates on defense issues. Unfortunately, its reports to its parent organization, the Governmental Council of the Western European

Union, can have little effect owing to the inactivity of that higher body. An interesting feature of the Union is that the obligation to come to the defense of another member under attack is unconditional and automatic, making the defensive guarantee of its treaty language stronger than that of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>4</sup> Revival of the WEU defensive organization is sometimes suggested as a way to develop a stronger European defense grouping, especially because France is a full participant. However, its relatively small core, lacking the flank countries; its demanding defense obligation; and the differing restrictions between its own members (between Germany and the rest) make a revival of the WEU defensive organization politically difficult. Because the Western European Union lacks much dynamic or creative potential, it has only limited relationships to US consultative objectives. The union, however, does represent a core defense group with assured French participation and therefore remains a significant security organization in the European context.

In fact, more comprehensive European defense groupings lack much popularity or widespread confidence based on the bruising struggle over the desirability of a European Defense Community which finally failed in 1954.<sup>5</sup> The failure of the Multilateral Nuclear Force concept in 1967, although not exclusively European, also left scars on alliance members who had earlier favored multinational groupings within NATO. The most common concern about a separate European defense entity appears to be the fear that over time the initial phase of European defense could somehow be "decoupled" from the US strategic nuclear "umbrella," despite the counter arguments that a strong European defense structure would meet other US criticisms of equal participation and burden sharing. In sum, Europeans are wary of proposals for a highly developed, separate, or independent European force structure, and approach the issue cautiously. Consequently, there are current limitations to the potential for European defensive groups to serve as springboards for US efforts to enhance our consultative efforts.



### ***The Eurogroup and the Independent European Programme Group***

The development of the European Community (EC), and the substantial economic integration of much of Western Europe, has brought recognition of the logical derivatives of closer European cooperation in the interest of defense efficiency. Accordingly, an informal NATO grouping was formed in 1968, consisting of the defense ministers of all NATO nations participating in the alliance's integrated force structure except the United States, Canada, France, and Iceland. The "Eurogroup" usually meets just before the regular semiannual ministerial meetings of NATO's Defense Planning Committee. Between these ministerial meetings, the Eurogroup is represented on an ad hoc basis at Brussels by their respective Permanent Representatives. A coordinating committee helps align the work of a number of subgroups; for example, subgroups considering equipment collaboration, communications, and medical support. In at least one instance, these subgroupings proved too exclusive, and the United States and Canada became associated belatedly with the subgroup considering training when it was recognized that enhanced coordination of military training went beyond European membership. Each Eurogroup subgroup is under the chairmanship of one of the member countries, and the United Kingdom discharges the role of administrative coordination by acting as the informal Eurogroup secretariat.<sup>6</sup> However, great effort has gone into maintaining a low-profiled, informally administered system which could not be considered a separate European defense effort. The work of the Eurogroup tends to stress the most technical issues and has been useful in improving the planning, coordination, and efficiency of NATO resource programs.

An interesting companion organization of the Eurogroup is the Independent European Programme Group (IEPG), which has now taken over many of the functions of the Eurogroup subgroup known as Euronad (National Armament Directors Subgroup). The unique aspect of the IEPG is that, unlike

most other military elements of NATO, the IEPG has full French participation.<sup>7</sup> Some see the IEPG as a precursor to greater French involvement in European military planning, but other observers are more skeptical and believe that French participation in the IEPG has more direct linkage to the continued economic health of the French armaments industry than to any ideological accommodation to a NATO program. Nevertheless, full French participation in the IEPG is unique and might somehow prove to be a stepping stone to some future integration of European defense within the alliance framework. Consultation involving Eurogroup activities presents no special problems as it is simply accomplished within the existing NATO politico-military system (for example, the DPC meetings). Discussion of IEPG issues could be inhibited by the absence of the French in certain groups (for example, in the Defense Planning Committee), yet consultation can still be accomplished within the NATO rubric as the French are fully represented in the civil structure of the alliance.

### ***Nongovernmental NATO Organizations***

Also within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty, but not organic parts of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, are two associated bodies: the North Atlantic Assembly and the Atlantic Treaty Association. The North Atlantic Assembly (NAA) is an interparliamentary organization of the member countries which brings members from the national parliaments together annually for a plenary session.<sup>8</sup> The NAA committees (for example, political, military, and economic) meet semiannually to conduct the substantive work of the body and a standing committee is maintained for the general direction of assembly activities. A 1977 report prepared for a US congressional subcommittee characterized US participation in the North Atlantic Assembly as having fallen far short of maximum effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>

The North Atlantic Assembly has been described as struggling with an "identity crisis" over its role because it has never been able to agree on a direct organic link with NATO, but is unwilling to accept the lesser role of an advisory club.

The form of the NAA product is in reports to the NATO Secretary General, which are then considered by means of the normal staff processes within NATO headquarters. Member governments are also informed of the NAA recommendations. The same 1977 congressional report observed that should the assembly wish to have an impact on the affairs of the alliance, its most effective option would be to improve its channels to national policymaking—through the links between the national delegations and their parent legislatures, and its channels to public opinion—through the press services in the parent countries.<sup>10</sup> The report also suggested the enhancement of substantive analytical work done for the assembly by expanding its secretariat's capability for independent research through creation of a "mini think-tank." The report further indicates that many key US congressmen have often not taken part in substantive NAA deliberations. In sum, the North Atlantic Assembly does not play as significant a role in consultation as it might, if its members were more directly and influentially associated with specific national positions on major issues before the alliance, and were even prepared to enforce their views by taking strong legislative action to influence their own governments' positions. If the linkage to the official NATO organization were to grow beyond the current advisory role, the North Atlantic Assembly could gain considerably greater influence in alliance business.<sup>11</sup>

Still, given the annual or semiannual meetings involved, and the lack of personal political identity of many parliamentary members with even their own national positions on alliance issues, there appears to be only limited potential for a government to decisively mobilize its NAA membership to support specific positions—especially those issues that are highly politicized within a country. In the United States, nuclear policy and US troop strengths in Europe would be examples of such controversial issues. Nevertheless, a greater complementary role in alliance consultation by key committee members of Congress could provide valuable counterweight to a common European perception of the US government as an uncoordinated and unpredictable body in foreign affairs. Al-

though they comprehend the academic governmental principles of the US federal system with its checks and balances and shared power between Congress and the executive, Europeans frequently have trouble genuinely understanding how Americans can find comfort in their seemingly contradictory system—a system where the President's foreign policy is attacked and ignored by 535 free spirits who somehow are capable of blocking funds, withholding approvals, and writing restrictive and limiting public law that seems to tie the President's hands in the most critical aspects of defense and economic policy. Consequently, few Europeans, tutored in the parliamentary system where the leadership is intrinsically part of a working legislative majority until a government falls, can feel real empathy for the comparatively undisciplined American system which can and does deny majority support at any time on any issue.<sup>12</sup>

The second nongovernmental organization within the NATO framework is the Atlantic Treaty Association made up of private, voluntary societies in all NATO countries. The association was organized to educate and inform the public, as well as to conduct research, in order to promote the objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>13</sup> In the United States, the Atlantic Council of the United States actively pursues those goals with an extensive program of studies and publications. This program includes a number of study groups addressing key alliance issues. The results of this continuous effort are reflected in published policy papers that are distributed to an estimated 50,000 recipients.<sup>14</sup> The tone of the papers is scholarly, and skeptics may question whether these efforts have much influence beyond the academic community and foreign policy elites of this country. Still, that influence is significant in itself and certainly supports considerable analytical effort which would not be possible without the support and publication outlets of the association. Because the association exists to support and reinforce an Atlanticist view of US-European relations, it is an advocate rather than a completely objective observer of Atlantic relations, although other views are regularly presented in the US council's publications. While the US

council has wide informal influence in the North Atlantic community, its very separation from official US positions disassociates it from the formal consultative process. Nevertheless, the wide influence of its membership should not be forgotten, and the United States can continue to profit by the council's support, especially on those issues involving long-term trends and consensus building. Because the Atlantic Council of the United States is an independent, nongovernmental body, it would be inappropriate for the US government to attempt to influence the council or its activities. But official US agencies could profit from the results of the council by taking a forthright, open approach to providing its researchers and influential membership the maximum amount of timely, relevant information concerning US positions on alliance issues. Such information would best equip these elites to deal most effectively with their nonofficial alliance counterparts in building confidence in mutual defense efforts.

### ***The European Community***

Leaving aside those organizations directly associated with NATO, there is another growing European political grouping that must be considered by Americans concerned with the future defense policies of NATO—the European Community (EC). Evolving from a series of organizations concerned primarily with the economic integration of Europe, the European Community has reached a level of maturity where community-wide polity is more often sought. Initially, the European Community eschewed defense issues as an appropriate subject for its formal deliberations under the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, considering NATO the proper forum for such consultation—nine of its ten current members are members of NATO.<sup>15</sup> The tenth member, Ireland, is not a member of NATO, but a neutral nation with strong policies against association with a defense pact. The French also have a history of aversion to detailed discussion of defense matters in the EC framework.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, a spirited debate has developed in the European Parliament and European Council over the desirability and utility of discussing "security" issues. There

are several views on this debate,<sup>17</sup> but most recent analysis indicates the trends are toward greater efforts at political unity and with that a wider discussion of politico-security issues under the auspices of European Political Cooperation (EPC).

There have been a series of moves toward wider EC discussion of security policies, as distinct from defense matters that would involve actual military force and employment plans. Two recent proposals illustrate the flavor of the debate. The first was the 1981 Genscher-Colombo initiative within the EC Council of Ministers that proposed a merging of EC-ECP functions, to include consideration of security issues. This latter point appeared to have widespread appeal, and some agreement on including elements of security "policy" was reached in the November 1981 report of the EC ministers' meeting in London. The concept of merging the European Community and European Political Cooperation was far more controversial and has met considerable resistance. Yet, as one commentator has observed, in both cases reality may have overtaken formal policy as security issues are already a part of European Political Cooperation and EPC and EC discussions are today conducted nearly simultaneously at the foreign minister level.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly enough, the Genscher-Colombo draft was finally acted upon by an EC summit meeting on 19 June 1983, but in a significantly diluted form. The earlier concept of stringent EPC obligations was reduced to a declaration of solemn intent of political integration. Nevertheless, the concept of intensified consultation on foreign policy issues, "including the co-operation of the position of Member States on the political and economic aspects of security," remains a central feature of the final version.<sup>19</sup> The second proposal was a study on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament to examine the interrelationship of European Political Cooperation and European security. By majority vote, that committee reported out a document concluding that the European Parliament had a legitimate role in discussion of vital security concerns. Further, the report noted that more effective coordination should take place between the political consultations in European Political Cooperation

and NATO, and the EPC consultations should attempt to strengthen NATO efforts.<sup>20</sup>

Initiated in 1969, European Political Cooperation was designed to improve the political cooperation, and where possible, the actions of EC members. However, because the 1957 Treaty of Rome makes no current provision for such EC political consultation on topics beyond those issues contained in that largely economic pact, members set out to create a sort of transparent subterfuge which could accomplish the appropriate level of consultation *outside* the formal structure of the Economic Community. Meeting separately from European Council gatherings at the heads-of-state-and-government level, at the foreign-ministers level (both formally and informally), and monthly at an informal steering-group gathering of political directors of member countries, EPC participants seek common ground in the members' foreign policy, especially as it relates to third parties. Because the discussion of foreign and economic policies in their totality cannot logically progress without including some security issues in discussions, there is a recognized need to coordinate the common EPC views with other close allies.

In 1974, the so-called Gymnich formula was developed, requiring that the incumbent President-in-Office of the EC Council of Ministers inform the United States of the subjects on the agenda of political cooperation meetings and the results of deliberations. The presidency, however, rotates among EC members every six months, and the quality of these consultations will obviously vary with this semiannual change of players. While the Gymnich formula imparts useful information, it can be largely a *fait accompli* by the time the US government is informed. Other non-EC members of NATO (Canada, Norway, Turkey, Iceland, Portugal, and Spain) must make separate but similar bilateral provisions for information.<sup>21</sup> The presence of neutral Ireland in the EPC process also inhibits direct EC to NATO interface. In any case, EPC participants probably do not desire institutionalized interference in their proceedings by non-EC members, but would tolerate, if not encourage, informal dialogue and exchange of

views. The result of the current EPC process is characterized by Burrows and Edwards as "untidy" and a glance at the asymmetric nature of NATO, Eurogroup, and EC membership reinforces that view (see table 3.1).

The Director of the Cabinet of the NATO Secretary General, S.I.P. Van Campen, presents another view. He suggests that, EC membership aside, NATO allies have an obligation of prior consultation, and alliance EPC participants should present their security views in the NATO forum before executing those views in some fashion. NATO agreement is not necessary, only a willingness to listen and a readiness to modify one's national view if convinced.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, former UK Ambassador Sir Clive Rose has suggested that conclusions already reached in European Political Cooperation could be used as a basis for a "European" view in the North Atlantic Council.<sup>23</sup>

There is no easy way out of the dilemma of what is best for Western defense, and it will take considerable effort to find a procedure that avoids the potential destructiveness of two competing systems. The matter will not be limited to EPC proceedings alone as European Parliament and European Council initiatives on the desirability of security policy discussions continue to increase. NATO must find some consultative accommodation with the European Community on security and defense issues to reduce the confusion that will surely arise with a proliferation of West European security forums. The question does not appear to be whether EC members will or will not continue to expand their political discussions (to include security policies), but at what rate these discussions will continue to expand. If the goal of the European Community continues to be eventual political unity, then this trend toward a common security policy must logically continue. Consequently, those who are concerned with the effectiveness of NATO defense planning should concentrate on how the EPC process and the NATO consultative process can complement each other. The European Community and European Political Cooperation are in place and developing, and even the most convinced Atlanticist must somehow be reconciled to that



**TABLE 3.1 MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN FORUMS**

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<b>MEMBER COUNTRY</b>	<b>EC/EPC</b>	<b>NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY</b>	<b>EUROGROUP</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Greece</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Norway</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

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**\*Signatories, but currently not in integrated military structure of NATO.**

**<sup>b</sup>Spain and Portugal are candidate members of the EC awaiting entry.**

**<sup>c</sup>Turkey has an observer status with the EC and seeks eventual membership.**

fact, regardless of its potential competitive impact upon NATO. Americans, in particular, should become more knowledgeable of this alternative European forum and concerned with its lack of effective interface with NATO.

With this background of both formal politico-military consultation within NATO and the parallel consultative bodies available both within the alliance and outside it, we can begin to understand the problems facing those charged with the obligation to consult. That is not, of course, much of an accomplishment unless we proceed to overcome these problems. The next chapters suggest how the United States might enhance its consultation in the near-term.

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## **Chapter 4**

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### **IMPROVING US CONSULTATIVE PROCEDURES**

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The descriptive chapters of this study have traced the NATO consultative system, US approaches to the official politico-military consultative process, and parallel organizations and groups that can influence NATO deliberations. The problems affecting NATO consultations are many, but near-term, likely alternatives are lacking. Even though there are seemingly endless proposals for radical reorganization and reorientation of NATO, there appears to be little widespread support for such moves in either the United States or Europe. In fact, some writers now focus on maintaining the defense core of the North Atlantic Alliance unchanged and suggest significant changes in institutional structure in parallel or alternative international organizations, leaving NATO largely as it is today. For example, a recent report by four respected Atlantic scholars would leave NATO largely untouched, but suggests consideration of a "principal" nations approach (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Japan) to provide strategic leadership *above the level of NATO* and other existing groupings of Western nations.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of the solutions eventually reached, the purpose of this study is to concentrate on how present systems of NATO consultation can be used more effectively and, more specifically, how the United States can improve its use of the process. In the near-term the United States could enhance its manner of doing consultative business by better choice of topics for consulta-

tion, by closer analysis of the desired results of consultation, and by much more rigorous review of allied interests and stakes in any specific position.<sup>2</sup> With those analytical guidelines in mind, we can then conclude with some specific applications to our intragovernmental procedures for initiating or responding to politico-military moves in the NATO consultative process.

### ***Is Consultation Necessary?***

A first step toward effective consultation is the rudimentary choice of topics for the NATO politico-military forum. A topic concerning a potential threat to "the territorial integrity, political independence, or security" of a member nation *must* be discussed collectively before its implementation, no matter how painful or divisive it may be. The North Atlantic Treaty has at its core a contractual defense partnership that demands collective decision on and support of major security issues. A second category of topics that require unequivocal prior consultation are those demanding collective decision-making on an alliance position, such as a negotiating offer or proposal in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions negotiations where one alliance negotiates directly with another, and participants are not permitted separate national negotiating positions. A third category would arise when another NATO nation (or group of nations) would insist that a specific topic be considered within the consultative forum. The United States would find itself forced to deal with such a topic unless it could develop a compelling argument clearly demonstrating the inappropriateness of the item for consultation (for example, an internal domestic matter), and thus could convince the sponsor nation to withdraw it from consultation. Beyond these rather obvious imperatives, however, the choice of topics becomes more malleable and the necessity for wise choices comes to the fore.

### ***Is Consultation Wise?***

If the United States has the option of initiating discussion of a topic of its own choosing, beyond the unavoidable situa-

tions described above, we would do well to first assess our proposed consultative topic and national position on that topic with a tough-minded analysis along the following lines:

- Does this US position have any realistic hope of acceptance, and if so, at what price?
- Are we genuinely interested in allied views, and will we accept the obligation to incorporate those views in our final position?
- Do our allies have an active, participatory role to play in executing this proposed position—are they players or observers?

These three interrogatives merit further discussion. Clearly, they are not mutually exclusive and rarely will be answerable on a simple yes or no basis. Nevertheless, they will assist us in probing the wisdom of pursuing a proposed consultative topic within a NATO forum.

Some proposals are realistically unattainable at an acceptable cost. The time to evaluate that tradeoff is *before* the United States has placed its weight and prestige behind a particular position. Some will consider this an affront to principle, especially those who approach the NATO forum ideologically rather than pragmatically and who, perhaps, overestimate the level of US "dominance" in the alliance. The United States may indeed dominate the military dimensions of the alliance, but we have no corner on ideological values.

Despite the occasional lapse of a few NATO members into periods of authoritarian government, NATO nations generally prize the pluralism of the many political and economic systems represented across the alliance and will refuse to be driven by ideologically based policies for which they do not share acceptance. One member's ideological perceptions are as valid as another's, and although the United States can, on occasion, simply bully its way through the Council, that involves great political cost in future cooperation and support. Such occasions of intimidation must be reserved only for

watershed issues, if they are to be used at all. Even when the most contentious aspects of an issue involve scarce resources rather than an ideological principle, the costs may prove too great. A possible example may be found in the discussions of out-of-area issues.

If the United States were to press the allies to provide substantially greater resources to replace diverted US reinforcing elements, they might do so only at the expense of deferring already agreed-on conventional force improvements, pleading inadequate resources to accomplish both goals. Some US proposals may cut so directly across European positions that any compromise is unlikely. Examples of such apparently irreconcilable issues may include blanket trade sanctions against the Warsaw Treaty nations or proposals for combined military operations under a NATO flag outside the commonly agreed European boundaries (say in the Indian Ocean).

A nation's past record of NATO positions is a good indicator of its level of tolerance on any given issue, but may not reflect the present sensitivities and political conditions of that state. For example, ten years ago, nuclear issues were largely dealt with by government elites; in today's climate, a significant change in nuclear policies would generate broad, energetic responses throughout the domestic structure of almost any European nation. The best way to gauge a nation's probable response, therefore, is to ask its government privately and discreetly, not through speeches or press releases. This preliminary query may be made bilaterally or in the privacy of such off-the-record NATO gatherings as the Permanent Representatives' weekly luncheon. The key to the success of such an inquiry will be the discretion used, the enemy the insidious "leak"—or worse, public pronouncements by high-level officials.

Prior consultation aside, a number of analysts advise us to expect wide differences in national views, especially between European and US perceptions, and recommend that we not overload the alliance with irreconcilable, potentially destructive issues. Unless we believe an issue is so momentous

as to threaten the core defensive value of the alliance, it seems disproportionate to attempt to drive it into self-destruction within NATO forums simply to make a point or stress a national ideological position. Instead, the sponsor nation has the options of shelving the proposal for a more propitious day, of breaking the "golden rule" of consultation by unilateralism, or of modifying the position to accommodate others' views. That last choice invites discussion of the second interrogative: do we care what the allies have to say?

An old sergeant's saying, "you shouldn't ask the question if you can't stand the answer," applies to this commentary. If we are not genuinely interested in asking our allies' opinions before finalizing our own decisions, and if we are not willing to somehow *incorporate* their views into our final position, we should avoid misleading them by purporting to subject that US position to full alliance consultation. There are ways of avoiding head-on confrontations, such as briefings after the fact or announcements of intended courses of action in the name of exchanging information. Such actions have the character of "advising" our allies rather than truly "consulting" with them. We will often find situations that do not involve a practical need for prior consultation, but only prior information to spare allies the embarrassment of being caught unaware. In rare cases, allies will prefer not to be a full party to a US proposal that could involve them in unnecessary and unpleasant controversies, both internationally and domestically. Nevertheless, in those cases clearly involving overall alliance security and the obvious obligation of prior consultation, a concomitant obligation exists to hear and attempt to incorporate other members' views. Having said this, one must go on to somewhat modify that uncompromising position by assessing the directness of interest of those holding divergent views. This step carries us to a review of the third interrogative: will our NATO allies be observers or players in this proposal, and if participants, what role will they play?

The very language of the North Atlantic Treaty, "an armed attack against one ... shall be considered an attack against them all," binds all members to the ultimate common action of



warfare. Yet, which decisions can be said to be directly linked to that ultimate defense action (and so demand agreement by all), and which actions are more routine and highly specialized and thus require genuine effort by only a few members with little potential impact on the remainder? As NATO has matured over the past thirty-odd years, such routines and specializations have become more common. Many activities do not require action or responsibility on the part of all sixteen members. Consequently, a subtle relationship has developed between the weight that must be given a member's views on a proposed action and his actual participation in that action. This relationship is an unspoken one because every NATO member has the "right" to insist upon the inclusion of his views and even to block consensus by his objection. As a practical matter, most nations avoid such uncompromising terms. Self-discipline is obvious as most members avoid presenting strong positions on issues where their actual role is small. An unfortunate current exception is Greece, which insists on footnoting its differing views on any number of recent NATO actions.

*Certain national sensitivities must be respected in all cases (for example, Germany must not be implied to be a "special zone" for arms control), but when members have no active role to play they have a tendency to state their views and then take few steps to enforce those views. Because the NATO consensus system requires a negative or veto action to block unanimity, a nation need not explicitly endorse or support a position in order to allow it to pass—a member can merely acquiesce and allow a position to be adopted. On the other hand, if a member can convince others that an important national interest is in jeopardy, less concerned members frequently show deference to his view. The "sense of the house" is strong, and a concept of fair play underlies virtually all deliberations. It is possible to bully allies (either by threatening a veto or by insisting on an unbalanced representation of one's own views), but only at the cost of future cooperation and support. As such, this ploy should be used carefully and with great forbearance. In sum, an ally's expected participation or*

probable degree of shared risk will usually affect and modify his response to a specific proposal presented for politico-military consultation. If he is expected to be an active participant or risk-taker, he will insist on a significant role in decisionmaking and should be consulted as early and completely as possible. If his role is peripheral, and there is no potential for negative consequences to his security, the need for full consultation is less, and information or advice may be a more appropriate approach on a specific issue.

### ***Sensitizing US Internal Decision Procedures***

In the earlier review of the US interagency decisionmaking process, it was clear that allied sensitivities and responses to US consultative positions usually receive adequate consideration in the initial stages of the process, but that concerns about allied views tend to fade as the process accelerates. At that later point, parochial agency views and resource limits become central and the higher level personnel making the decisions are less familiar with allied concerns. The problem for supporting staffs, then, is how to focus the decisionmakers' attention on allied views throughout the fast-paced interagency coordination process. Some difficulty arises, however, as the allies are not represented at those meetings. By virtue of being the "missing man" at the table, the allies may have no voice once the discussions have passed their initial static positions as reported by US Mission NATO or some other first-line official reporter. As the dynamics of discussion heat up and agency positions crystallize, who will speak for the allies?

State Department representatives will often feel the obligation to do so, but they also have an agency position to promote. Other agencies frequently invoke allied concerns, but not surprisingly those observations are usually parallel to or supportive of that agency's own view. For the sake of objectivity and consistency, it would be most useful if some US person or agency were expected or tasked to present an allied view *throughout* the decisionmaking process to ensure that all parties are obligated to consider these external concerns with the

same seriousness afforded other views. The interagency process can be strengthened by appointment of an "allied view" representative for major issues.

Next, decisionmakers at all levels should routinely oblige subordinates to include information about allied views and the answers to such questions as the three illustrative interrogatives outlined above (that is, realistic acceptability, interest in incorporating allied views, and identification of allies as either players or observers). These allied views must be included at each briefing and in each position paper presented at every agency level. This information requirement must be ruthlessly enforced and implemented with challenges and skepticism, or it will quickly become a rubber-stamp process full of wishful thinking and bureaucratic block filling. It must be applied in every agency represented in the interagency coordination and decision process, especially those agencies not directly interfaced with the allies and, hence, where current allied opinions are not commonly understood.

Most important, decisionmakers should adopt a general policy that proposed US positions which would appear to have a collective impact on NATO, affect military security issues involving greater Europe, or potentially result in US confrontations with the Soviet Union or other Warsaw Pact members, will routinely be considered likely candidates for a NATO consultative forum. In case of ambiguities, the preference will be to consult in NATO. This recommendation is not meant to dictate that every topic considered for consultation will be automatically sent to US Mission NATO, however, for that would overload the consultative system and include irreconcilable issues that would prove destructive. What such a national position would ensure is that the *burden of proof* is shifted to require an agency's staff to *show cause* why a proposed topic and position *should not be* the subject of prior consultation in NATO and, barring that, why allies should not at least be advised or informed.

Some topics will be exempted as too hard, too costly, or otherwise inappropriate. In other cases, the form of consulta-

tion may be changed to an information briefing rather than a request for input and concurrence, the issue might be deferred, or the proposed US position could even be modified somewhat. In any case, the shift of responsibility in favor of routine consultation would force the United States to come to grips with each potential topic of NATO interest and to reach judgments based on the individual merits of each issue. The likelihood of embarrassing oversights would be reduced, and the quality of positions subjected to consultation would be improved by rigorous analysis *prior* to introduction in Brussels.<sup>3</sup>

While the form of analysis described above may improve our approach to the formal processes of politico-military consultation in Brussels, described in chapter 2, it may prove less useful as we approach the more indistinct parallel processes and groups identified in chapter 3. Those groups require differing approaches and consultative techniques, but they exert wide influence over alliance policies. Consequently, they deserve greater US attention.

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## Chapter 5

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### CONSULTATION OUTSIDE THE FORMAL NATO PROCESS

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The forms of critical analysis of and sensitivity to allied views suggested in the previous chapter are certainly applicable to other NATO and European consultative bodies, but because the US entree to those consultative processes is often ill-defined, less direct, and informal, better analysis will not in itself suffice to improve the quality of our national consultation. Indeed, more than a little consideration must be given to the institutional dynamics of each of these other consultative bodies and different approaches made to each. Some appear better left largely as they are, but approaches toward others can be refined and strengthened with no real institutional change—only modifications in the use of the existing structure and institutions. Finally, there is the issue of somehow searching outside the government-associated consultative bodies, discussed here and in the previous chapter, for ways to bring fresh concepts directly into the view of those consultative bodies.

### ***Military Committee, Eurogroup, and IEPG***

Both the Military Committee and the Eurogroup are ultimately responsible to the defense ministries of member countries and deal at the policy level with what many would describe as the technical aspects of military defense planning and force structure. The argument that their consultative work

should stress technical, nonpoliticized processes wherever possible has considerable merit. This emphasis maintains their credibility in military judgments and does not further complicate the role of civil committees and the Council itself by a proliferation of "semi-political" forums within NATO. Occasionally, military judgments will contradict political desires, and these two defense-oriented groups, although undeniably influenced by national political views, must be free to present independent judgments to the North Atlantic Council. Nevertheless, both the Military Committee and Eurogroup are fully integrated into the Brussels consultative system and any appropriate political aspect of the topic can be discussed in the larger NATO bodies to which they report—the Council or the Defense Planning Committee. The Independent European Programme Group (IEPG) may present a slightly greater difficulty because of French participation, but if circumstances require, issues raised in the IEPG probably could be discussed at the Council level where the French are full members. In the near future, however, the quality of consultation between the US and IEPG members on materiel issues will be inhibited by the lack of substantial progress in the "two way street" procurement of armaments by both Europeans and North Americans, each from the other. As long as either side of the Atlantic continues to emphasize procurement from its internal sources, there probably will be little consultation beyond technical exchanges.

In sum, current US relationships to these three bodies should suffice as long as our national inputs are formed with the same degree of analytical care previously suggested for the formal politico-military bodies in NATO's civil organizational hierarchy.

### ***The North Atlantic Assembly***

The North Atlantic Assembly (NAA), which NATO formally categorizes as a "nongovernmental" agency, offers a unique opportunity for the United States to complement its more formal, governmental consultation by allowing the presentation of *both* the supporting and dissenting views of the US body

politic toward NATO issues. By allowing face-to-face contact between members of the US Congress and their parliamentary counterparts of other NATO nations, the North Atlantic Assembly provides others an opportunity to better understand the differing views on NATO-related issues between both major US political parties and between the Congress and the administration. Unfortunately, the record of American participation at NAA sessions has not been robust, in part because the timing of the annual meetings is inconveniently related to the American political calendar. This tepid American interest may also derive from a feeling that NAA reports to the NATO Council receive only cursory and polite review and so the annual assembly exercise lacks meaning. Both of these perfectly valid complaints, however, overlook the value of the informal *consultative opportunity* involved.

While the substantive outputs of the North Atlantic Assembly may be arguable, there is still untapped potential for better consultation with other national party groups that can be both quantitatively and qualitatively enhanced if the US Congress consistently sends its full allocated representation and includes key members of those foreign affairs, military, and economic committees that deal constantly with European issues. Emphasis should be on what American members of Congress do best—interpersonal relations—and reports and resolutions to the Council afforded attention commensurate with their actual effect on activities in Brussels. Also, little is to be gained by American attempts to maneuver the assembly into confrontational situations with the NATO Council (representing the executive branches of alliance governments) as few parliamentary bodies of the alliance have the independence from their administrations that the US Congress enjoys. Alternatively, US participants are in a particularly strong position to explain grassroots American views, which will, in due course, be reflected by ballots as citizens choose new Presidents and members of Congress. Knowledge of those political trends and the rationale for adjustments in American positions



would be the principal benefit offered allied participants and more than justify the modest efforts involved.

### ***European Political Cooperation***

The most dynamic recent force in the official foreign policy mechanisms of Western Europe is the evolution of European Political Cooperation (EPC) among the ten members of the European Community (EC). In little more than a decade, this process of continuous, multilevel consultation has enabled EC governments to act together on many policy issues from Middle East policies to North-South issues. The process is less visible, but equally important where EC consensus cannot be reached on a controversial issue, because the EPC dialogue often eliminates surprise and increases understanding to the point where public recriminations can be avoided.

More recently, European Political Cooperation began to enter into *security policy* issues relevant to its members, the most well known of which were the common EC positions on proposals for confidence-building measures for discussion at the Belgrade and Madrid follow-on conferences of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Some see these excursions into security policy issues as growing competition with the NATO consultative process. Others see it as distinct from defense military planning and operations, and as a legitimate ingredient of EC political cohesion. Official US policy attempts to bridge these views by accepting the growth of the EC role in global concerns as a positive development, while reminding EC members that the Atlantic Alliance remains the vital underpinning of Western security.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, continued EPC development seems certain, although perhaps not along the rapid, central lines envisioned in the original Genscher-Colombo initiative to merge much of the EC-EPC processes. Regardless, the non-EC NATO allies, and the United States in particular, must find some positive accommodation for dialogue between the NATO and EC consultative bodies without impinging on the integrity of either process nor subordinating either body.

The proposal by S.I.P. van Campen that EC members of NATO present security issues under EPC consideration in the NATO consultative process before final endorsement has the advantage of simplicity, but would be almost certainly rejected by the EPC participants as subordinating their consultation to NATO views. Still, van Campen makes a telling point by noting that these EC governments have a prior, treaty-imposed obligation to consult on major security issues within the Atlantic Alliance, and that the evolutionary development of that consultative obligation bears their national endorsement of a series of NATO Council communiqués over the years.<sup>2</sup> Thus, they cannot escape that NATO obligation by virtue of the development of a later institutional consultative arrangement under the aegis of their EC membership.

Stanley R. Sloan suggests that if the United States intends to foster a framework of cooperation with EPC discussion of security issues, it might make formal acknowledgement of an EPC role in Western leadership. Further, the United States could encourage EPC study and recommendation of such security-related issues as the nature of the Soviet threat, use of trade sanctions in international relations, coordination of European arms production and procurements, Middle Eastern issues, and relations with the Third World. Sloan also suggests that the United States could encourage "direct and formal EPC contributions to NATO consultations on various political and economic aspects of security policy."<sup>3</sup> His points are well taken, and it is in this area that some semi-institutionalized dialogue may be possible which subordinates neither forum, yet allows all members to meet their consultative obligations in both.

One possibility would be some improvisation of the original EPC methodology whereby foreign ministers meet in different places on succeeding days (even in different cities), first as EPC consultants and then as the European Council of Ministers. NATO has regular, semiannual meetings of foreign ministers. On these occasions, a separate, informal meeting of ministers with an agenda limited exclusively to "security policy" issues would allow an exchange of views within a

NATO-related forum. To be effective, such a gathering would require privacy, nonattribution, and no subsequent publicity or communiqués. Representation would have to be limited, probably excluding aides and military staff. Even the presence of the Secretary General or members of the NATO Secretariat would have to be carefully scrutinized. It would probably be advisable to physically accommodate such a meeting outside the NATO headquarters itself, perhaps using some member nation's or even private facilities.

By conducting such a special gathering under the rubric of "security policy," all NATO members, EC and non-EC alike, would be free to present their own national positions and discuss those of all other members. The members of the European community would presumably present views similar to those they had already presented, or would present, in EPC discussions, and non-EC members would have the opportunity to exchange views on these as well as their own security policy positions. The EC position would not be the subject of discussion as such, except where it may already have been established in the public sector, and neither consultative process would be considered to have precedent over the other. This suggestion risks objection by Ireland, which would be excluded, as well as EC Commission representatives. The Irish, however, appear uncomfortable about many aspects of participating in substantive discussions of security policy, and the EC Commission representatives are actually observers, not full participants in the EPC process. Because the focus of the NATO-related forum would be on national views rather than prospective EPC positions, there should be no EPC institutional objection to members fulfilling their NATO consultative obligations in a separate forum.

The precise form of dialogue between NATO and EPC overlapping consultative bodies is not the substantive issue, only that such a dialogue should be started. It is not a case of either institution holding a monopoly on security issues, because both legitimately believe the subject a relevant and necessary element of their deliberations. The problem is finding parallel and complementary paths for each discrete process

rather than in choosing sides. The United States, the principal non-EC member of the Atlantic Alliance, should undertake to initiate the dialogue necessary to close this current gap. As useful as the so-called Gynmich formula is at present, it will soon be inadequate to support the growing scope of European Political Cooperation.

### ***The Need for Fresh Ideas***

Earlier sections of this paper have recommended more systematic procedures for reaching consultative decisions and better selection of consultative issues. Yet, a possible contradiction exists between such a selective approach to the consultative process and the obvious need for imaginative, innovative approaches to alliance issues. If we discipline and systematize our governmental approaches, do we not risk frustrating original thinking? Probably so, because at present there are only a few ways to insert new concepts into the formal NATO system, and virtually all require some form of member-government sponsorship. When the United States introduces a topic into the consultative forum, it also describes its national position, tentative or not.

NATO consultation does not normally involve brainstorming sessions, but the presentation and discussion of serious views of responsible governments. There are sessions where nonattribution is the rule (such as the Secretary General's private gatherings), or times when a committee member may label an idea as a "personal" view. Neither does the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group's work commit governments. If a detailed issue analysis is necessary, there is even the device of the so-called non-paper, which is put forward for discussion by a delegation without sponsorship.<sup>4</sup> However, the very nature of the formal NATO committee system, which exists to present *national* views, operates against its use as a stage for original and sometimes controversial views. The question is then, how to bring in more fresh ideas?

Harlan Cleveland reports that in 1966, as a part of *The Future Tasks of the Alliance* study, the Council established a

special group to which some governments sent political representatives. Four subgroups, supposedly without instructions from governments, were chaired by independent rapporteurs for the purpose of providing "irresponsible" inputs into a responsible process of policy planning. Cleveland further notes, "where the inputs reflected the views of major governments, they made a major contribution, and where they did not, they did not."<sup>5</sup>

Although NATO supports extensive scientific research, independent research associated with the political or economic aspects of the alliance is more modest and generally restricted to sponsorship within the NATO Research Fellowship Programme.<sup>6</sup> In-house research appears to be restricted to the work of the various Brussels staff elements.

In a paper published in 1969, Walter Schuetze<sup>7</sup> suggested the creation of an independent European Defense Institute, modeled along the lines of the private International Institute for Strategic Studies. His proposed institute would have a strong European governmental component (membership financed, at least partially staffed with governmental employees on loan, and provided current official policy information), but would not be government-directed. Its purpose would be to work out recommendations for the sponsoring governments, but as Schuetze notes, "the practical question is how this [institute] could be meshed with the NATO staffs."

Schuetze believed the work of this institute should differ from that of the NATO Defense College in Rome (or other NATO military agencies). The Defense College tends to concentrate on its training role rather than on extensive research—its research projects are somewhat restricted to those of interest to its own military channels (the Military Committee). Its location in Rome would also affect its responsiveness to requests originating in Brussels, and the college would require additional resources to increase significantly its research role. Consequently, the college would not be a propitious base for wide-ranging research efforts.

Many nongovernmental institutes, some connected with universities and other private institutions, are also concerned with NATO or European security issues. In the United States and other NATO countries, military colleges conduct NATO-related studies and publish papers and journals. The North Atlantic and Western European Assemblies present recommendations and positions. All these products are available to policymakers, yet NATO appears to lack a coordinated, central system of integrating this substantial body of ideas, or of selecting out issues to be reviewed in the formal consultative process. Certainly, occasional good ideas are captured and presented by the Secretariat or a member nation's delegation, but a comprehensive system appears absent. This area is worth developing further to ensure that a wide range of ideas are available to participants in the consultative process.

Walter Schuetze's concept of an independent research establishment staffed by "insiders" with ready access to privileged data would provide the most pragmatic approach to institutionalizing research. The principal danger for such a research institute is that it could eventually be co-opted and become little more than an appendage to the international staffs in Brussels. Despite this danger, the institute should be located close enough to NATO headquarters to have access to personnel and documentation necessary to its work; it should have representation from all NATO nations, not just the European membership Schuetze envisioned; and its personnel should be drawn from the civil and military, governmental and independent sectors of member governments, in order to deal with the full politico-military spectrum of alliance issues. Such an institute could not logically be subordinated to the Secretariat without losing its independence, but a special oversight board would be necessary to provide a degree of high-level guidance and review. The principal task of this research organization would be to develop independent approaches to alliance problems and issues which cut across national interests, but which have a realistic chance of gaining alliance acceptance. Only "insiders" can walk such a narrow line of acceptability; only an independent group could consistently

develop proposals that are beyond the political capacity of any single nation to officially sponsor because of domestic or international sensitivities.

Still, the proposals must have a core of political realism to be useful, for, as Harlan Cleveland noted in 1966, only those concepts that can gain the support of major alliance governments are likely to make the transition into NATO policy. Although an independent research group can present respectably developed proposals for NATO consideration, they can become policies only with the political will and determination of the Council and its supporting committees. Consequently, NATO's collective leadership should undertake to form such a group only if it is prepared to use the research results constructively, rather than shelve them after a polite reading. Much of the material may be controversial and stress-inducing, but the benefits of continued innovative inputs will probably make that price worthwhile, provided the leadership is willing to commit itself to use the material in consultation. If not, such a research group could eventually become the cause, and not the cure, of alliance dispute.

### ***Summing Up***

Consultation, like almost all other aspects of the NATO system, is a shared responsibility. It is essential to the continuity of an alliance of sixteen sovereign states that deliberately lacks a supranational directive body; yet consultation is not an absolute, religious vow. Instead, it is a political process, open to interpretation and rationalization.

As frustrating as this process can be on both sides of the Atlantic, it is an essential part of managing the common defense, and, with a little greater effort, can be accomplished more effectively. Trying harder is not enough, however; the effort must produce concrete results. Americans can contribute to this improvement by acting with greater concern for allied views and by recognizing both the shortcomings and the strengths of US institutional procedures. By better analysis,

we can choose better issues, better methods of presentation, and realistic objectives.

There is no need for extensive structural or organizational change, just better management of our present resources. In achieving such self-discipline, we must be wary of stifling initiative and innovation, however; and some process to assure the flow of fresh ideas into the consultative forum would be a valuable contribution to the NATO system. Neither should we forget the several parallel consultative bodies available to those interested in Western security. The United States can profit from these added opportunities for consultation, learning to deal with each individual body on a complementary and not a competitive basis.

In the near-term, these extra efforts at enhancing our consultation cannot help but improve the quality of both the American inputs and the resultant NATO collective decisions; in the long term, such efforts will support European defense efforts as NATO nations undertake a greater role in resource-sharing and decisionmaking.



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## NOTES

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### **Introduction**

1. Some recently published materials provide excellent insights into the growing differences between NATO allies, especially between Europeans and the United States. Readers may wish to look at Stanley R. Sloan's Congressional Research Service analysis, *Crisis in the Atlantic Alliance: Origins and Implications*, prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, March 1982); Eliot A. Cohen's "The Long-Term Crisis of the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs* 61 (Winter 1982-83): 326-327; Simon Serfaty's "Atlantic Fantasies," *Washington Quarterly* 5 (Summer 1982): 74-81; and A.W. Deporte's, "NATO of the Future: Less is More," *The Fletcher Forum* 7 (Winter 1983): 1-6.
2. W. Tapley Bennett, Jr., "The Challenge for NATO in the 1980s," *The Atlantic Community Quarterly* 19 (Fall 1981): 298-299.

### **Chapter 1**

1. Two excellent works providing considerable detail on the evolution and working of the NATO consultative process are Roger Hill, *Political Consultation in NATO*, Wellesley paper 6/78 (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1978); and Frederic L. Kirgis Jr., "NATO Consultations as a Component of National Decisionmaking," *American Journal of International Law* 73 (July 1979): 372-406.
2. "The North Atlantic Treaty," signed 4 April 1949, at Washington, DC, included as item 10-2, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Facts and Figures* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1981), hereafter referred to as *NATO Facts and Figures*, pp. 264-266.

3. Ibid., para. 43, doc. 10-5, "Text of the Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO," 13 December 1956, pp. 274-275.
4. Francis A. Beer, *Integration and Disintegration in NATO* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1969), p. 28.
5. *NATO Facts and Figures*, para. 42, doc. 10-5, p. 274.
6. Ibid., para. 51, p. 276.
7. Ibid., para. 32, p. 273.
8. Ibid., para. 7, doc. 10-6, "The Future Tasks of the Alliance," December 1967, p. 289.
9. Ibid., para. 15, p. 290.
10. Ibid., para. 11, doc. 10-7, "Declaration on Atlantic Relations," June 1974, p. 292.
11. Kirgis, "NATO Consultations," pp. 404-406.
12. See Hill, *Political Consultation*, "The Consultative Network," pp. 28-50, and "The Committee Framework," pp. 50-59; and *NATO Facts and Figures*, "Political Consultation," pp. 119-125, for greater detail on the mechanics of this process.
13. Hill, *Political Consultation*, p. 40.
14. *NATO Facts and figures*, p. 122.
15. Hill, *Political Consultation*, p. 56.
16. Despite the logic of Military Committee membership being based on the participation of a country's forces in the integrated NATO defense structure, presence there appears to hinge more on the usefulness of a country's participation in *planning* for NATO area defense. Greece and Spain have remained members of the Military Committee while their forces were outside the NATO defense structure and France remains as an observer on the Military Committee.
17. *NATO Facts and Figures*, p. 92.
18. See Luc Crollen's chapter, "NATO and Arms Control," in Lawrence S. Kaplan's *NATO After Thirty Years* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1981), pp. 215-236, for an excellent summary of the specialized consultation of arms control.
19. Ibid., p. 122.
20. Most of the examples contained in this section are drawn from Ambassador Harlan Cleveland's excellent chapter, "The Golden

Rule of Consultation," from his book, *NATO: The Transatlantic Bargain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970). The first-hand views of this independent-minded diplomat are well worth reading for those interested in the experiences of a skillful practitioner of consultation.

21. Manlio Brosio, "Consultation and the Atlantic Alliance," *Survival* 16 (May-June 1974): 117.

22. Cleveland, *NATO: The Transatlantic Bargain*, pp. 18, 28, 31, 33.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

25. Carol Edler Baumann, *Political Cooperation in NATO*, National Security Studies Group (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, June 1960), pp. 11-12.

26. Simon Serfaty, "Atlantic Fantasies," *Washington Quarterly* 5 (Summer 1982): 78.

## **Chapter 2**

1. The structure of the Carter administration's NSC coordination system is outlined in PD/NSC-1 and 2, both dated 20 January 1977, published as Appendixes A and B in Robert E. Hunter's *Presidential Control of Foreign Policy: Management or Mishaps?* Washington Papers 91 (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1982), pp. 103-108. The structure of the Reagan administration's NSC coordination system is outlined in a press release from the office of the White House Press Secretary dated 19 January 1982.

2. See Philip Odeen, "Organizing for National Security," *International Security* 5 (Summer 1980): 111-129, for observations concerning NSC management of the decision process (p. 116). This account underscores some of the bureaucratic deficiencies encountered in the interagency process.

3. Roger Hill, *Political Consultation in NATO* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1978), pp. 101-103.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-91.

### Chapter 3

1. Peter Hill-Norton, *No Soft Options, The Politico-Military Realities of NATO* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), p. 85. Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Peter Hill-Norton served as both UK Military Representative and Chairman of the Military Committee at NATO headquarters. Chapter 9 of this book, "The Higher Direction of NATO," is most useful in outlining the role of the military at Brussels.
2. Besides the AGARD, the military agencies operating under the Military Committee (MC) include: the Military Agency for Standardization, the NATO Electronic Warfare Advisory Committee, the NATO Training Group, the Military Committee Meteorological Group, and the ten Command, Control, and Communications Systems agencies and committees. The Canada-US Regional Planning Group also works under MC direction. See *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Facts and Figures* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1981), hereafter referred to as *NATO Facts and Figures*, pp. 102-112 and 241-251 for greater detail.
3. The Western Union was established under the 4 March 1948 Brussels Treaty, given a military body (Western Union Defense Organization) in September 1948, and enlarged by the addition of Germany and Italy as a part of the October 1954 Paris agreements. *NATO Facts and Figures*, pp. 19-20, 32-33.
4. Bernard Burrows and Geoffrey Edwards, *The Defense of Western Europe* (London: Butterworth Scientific, 1982), pp. 41-44.
5. Robert E. Osborne, *NATO, The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 91-95. See also Edward Fursdon's *The European Defense Community: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), for greater detail.
6. *The Eurogroup* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1979), 37 pages, describes the organization and objectives of the Eurogroup.
7. Burrows and Edwards. *The Defense of Western Europe*, provide much insight into the current workings of both the Eurogroup (pp. 44-51) and the IEPG (pp. 51-57).
8. *NATO Facts and Figures*, pp. 255-257.
9. Stanley R. Sloan, Congressional Research Service, *The Role of the North American Assembly*, prepared for the Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1979), 55 pages.

10. Ibid., pp. 2-3, 14-18. Another very useful work on US participation in the North Atlantic Assembly was published subsequent to completion of this monograph. Readers interested in this topic should see *Strengthening Interparliamentary Consultation: The Future of the North Atlantic Assembly* (Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council of the United States, June 1983), a report of the Atlantic Council's Working Group on the North Atlantic Assembly, David M. Abshire, Chairman, and J. Allen Hovey, Jr., Rapporteur.
11. Martin Hillenbrand, "Structural and Organizational Problems in NATO: Some Solutions," in *NATO, The Next Thirty Years*, ed., Kenneth A. Myers (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 417-433.
12. Gregory Flynn, et al., *The Internal Fabric of Western Security* (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun and Co., Publishers, Inc., 1981), pp. 194 and 235.
13. *NATO Facts and Figures*, pp. 258-259.
14. Atlantic Council of the United States, *Issues and Options: 1983-84* (Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council of the United States, 1983), p. 12.
15. The current European Community members are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Portugal and Spain are candidates for membership and Turkey has status as an observer seeking eventual membership.
16. H. Peter Dreyer, "Beyond the Common Market," *Europe*, no. 235, January-February 1983, pp. 20-21.
17. There are some recent and well-written discussions of the EPC vis a vis NATO consultative processes, and readers interested in the merits of each of these processes may wish to read further. Burrows and Edwards, *The Defense of Europe*, pp. 130-147, discuss the issue from the point of view of those who support greater expansion of the European Community into security matters. Stanley R. Sloan's Congressional Research Service Report, *A Uniting Europe and US Interests*, CRS Report No. 83-72F, Washington, DC, 31 March 1983, provides a timely analysis of the EPC process and its implications for US foreign policy. S.I.P. Van Campen's chapter, "NATO Political Consultation and European Political Cooperation," in *Allies in a Turbulent World*, ed., Frans A.M. Alting von Geusan (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982), argues the propriety of continuing to rely on the NATO forum for serious discussion of European security issues.

Neils Haagerup's article, "Defense and Security in the European Community," in *NATO's Fifteen Nations* 27 (August-September 1982): 38-42, suggests that there is room for discussion of security issues in both forums and that the growth of EC political consciousness is unlikely to be reversed. Mr. Haagerup was also the rapporteur for a 3 December 1982 report on *European Political Cooperation and European Security*, prepared on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament (doc. no. 1-946/82). The report provides a broad view of European opinion and concludes that security considerations are a proper part of EPC consultations which will on occasion result in differing European and North American approaches. Pieter Dankert, President of the European Parliament, offers an argument for greater commonality in defense policy in a short article, "A Common Defense Policy Needed," in *Europe*, no. 234, November-December 1982, pp. 30-32. Chapter 4, "Peace and Security," of the recent book, *The European Community: Progress or Decline*, by Karl Kaiser et al. (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1982), addresses the need for a larger European dimension in European and NATO defense efforts. Although written in 1974, Lothar Ruhl's *The Nine and NATO* (Paris: The Atlantic Institute for International Affairs, 1974), offers some excellent insight from the view of a NATO advocate. J. Robert Schaezel's *The Unhinged Alliance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), provides the unique perspective of a former US Ambassador to the European Community.

18. Stanley R. Sloan, "A Uniting Europe and US Interests," pp. 23-28.

19. European Community press release (EC News no. 11/83) of June 1983, following the 17-19 June 1983 EC Summit Meeting at Stuttgart, Germany, and its attached text of the Solemn Declaration on European Union, dated 19 June 1983.

20. Neils Haagerup, "European Political Cooperation and European Security," pp. 7-8.

21. Burrows and Edwards, *The Defense of Western Europe*, pp. 134-137.

22. Van Campen, "NATO Political Consultation and European Political Cooperation," pp. 73-74.

23. Sir Clive Rose, "Political Consultation in the Alliance," *NATO Review* 31 (January 1983): 1-4.

## **Chapter 4**

1. Karl Kaiser, et al., *Western Security: What Has Changed? What Should be Done?* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1981).
2. Throughout this paper, I have tended to slight Canadian views as distinct from their North American partner. Unfortunately, this is an all too common treatment of a sound ally. By population and world perception, Canada has great empathy with several of the smaller NATO states, yet geography excludes it from European groupings that may be attractive to its polity. Canadians have never been known to suffer from shyness in NATO forums, however, and I leave it to these able personnel to actively present their own views regarding the consultative process, a process they have championed since the inception of the alliance.
3. Roger Hill, *Political Consultation in NATO* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1978), pp. 91-98, provides a very useful discussion of the concepts of inputs to and withholds from the consultative process in Brussels for either strategic or tactical national purposes. It is worth reading to gain an appreciation for the uses of national positions in the official NATO forum.

## **Chapter 5**

1. Richard Burt, 7 March 1983, statement before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as reported in the *Department of State Bulletin* 83 (April 1983): 65-66.
2. S.I.P. van Campen, "NATO Political Consultation and European Political Cooperation," in *Allies in a Turbulent World*, ed., Frans A.M. Alting von Geusan (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982), pp. 63-74.
3. Stanley R. Sloan, *A Uniting Europe and US Interests*, CRS Report no. 83-72F (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 31 March 1983), pp. 45-47.
4. Roger Hill, *Political Consultation in NATO* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1978), p. 82.
5. Harlan Cleveland, *The Transatlantic Bargain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 144-145.



6. *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Facts and Figures* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1981), pp. 133, 209-214. The NATO Fellowship Programme, although limited in numbers, does produce some excellent products. The legal analysis of the NATO consultation process by Frederick L. Kirgis Jr., cited in the endnotes to chap. 1 is an example of the high quality of individual research sponsored by this program.

7. Walter Schuetze, "European Defense Cooperation and NATO," pp. 131-196, in *The Atlantic Papers Annual* (New York: The Atlantic Institute, 1969-1970). His proposal for a European Defense Institute is discussed at pp. 167-168.

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Stanley R. Sloan, Congressional Research Service, was the advisory reader for this study. Evelyn Lakes was the NDU Press writer-editor.